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**FINAL REPORT FOR NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE  
ADMINISTRATION GRANT NAGW-254**

from

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(NASA-CR-183029) PHOTOCHEMICAL AND THERMAL  
MODELING IN THE EARLY ATMOSPHERE OF THE  
EARTH Final Report, 1 Oct. 1981 - 31 Dec.  
1987 (California Inst. of Tech.) 3 p

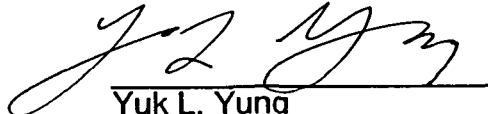
N88-25093

Unclas  
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**PHOTOCHEMICAL AND THERMAL MODELING IN THE EARLY  
ATMOSPHERE OF THE EARTH**  
(formerly Photochemical Processes in the Primitive Atmosphere of the Earth)

Period of Research October 1, 1981 to December 31, 1987

NASA Technical Officer  
John Rummel

  
Yuk L. Yung  
Principal Investigator

## FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

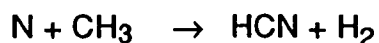
A number of research projects were completed under this proposal in the past fiscal year. They are briefly summarized as follows:

### Estimation of the reaction rate for the formation of CH<sub>3</sub>O from H + H<sub>2</sub>CO: Implications for chemistry in the solar system.

The simplest carbon compounds, present in the terrestrial and planetary atmospheres, exhibit a wide range of oxidation states, carbon dioxide and methane being the most oxidized and the most reduced form of carbon, respectively. The question arises as to the origin of and the interconversion among the carbon species. The chemical pathways for the conversion of CH<sub>4</sub> to CO and CO<sub>2</sub> are for the part known. The reverse process, the reduction of CO to CH<sub>4</sub> is however, poorly understood. We propose a new reaction  $\text{H}_2\text{CO} + \text{H} + \text{M} \rightarrow \text{CH}_3\text{O} + \text{M}$ , which might play a fundamental role in the reduction of CO to CH<sub>4</sub>.

### An update of nitrile photochemistry on Titan

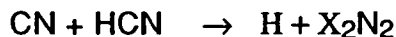
According to Yung *et al.* (1984), the primary source of nitrile compounds in the atmosphere of Titan is the reaction



where the nitrogen atoms are derived from electron impact dissociation of N<sub>2</sub>,

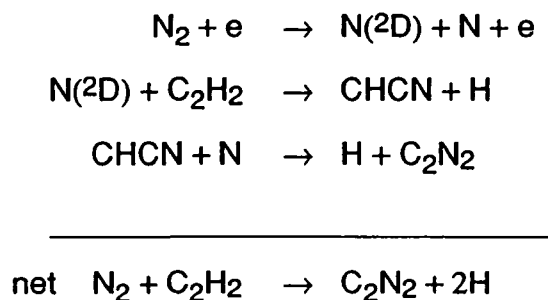


Cyanogen (C<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub>) was thought to form via



and the authors showed that this reaction could account for the observed abundance of C<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub> (Kunde *et al.* (1981) if the rate coefficient, *k*, were as large as  $3.1 \times 10^{-11} \text{cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}$ . Recent experiments by Li *et al.* (1984) suggested that  $k = 1.8 \times 10^{-14} \text{cm}^3 \text{s}^{-1}$  at 300 K, which is considerably lower than the original estimate.

So a new scheme has to be explored to explain the Voyager observations. The postulated new scheme is as follows:



#### Publications

- Y.L. Yung. An Update of Nitrile Photochemistry on Titan. *Icarus* **72**, 468-472 (1987).
- Y.L. Yung, W.A. Drew, J.P. Pinto, and R.R. Friedl. Estimation of the Reaction Rate for the Formation of CH<sup>3</sup>O from H + H<sub>2</sub>CO: Implications for Chemistry in the Solar System. *Icarus* **73**, 516-526 (1988).
- Y.L. Yung, R.R. Friedl, J.P. Pinto, K.D. Bayes, and J.-S. Wen. Kinetic Isotopic Fractionation and the Origin of HDO and CH<sup>3</sup>D in the Solar System. *Icarus* **74**, 121-132 (1988).